



NEWS RELEASE

HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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Contact: Sherry Llewellyn
Cpl. Lisa Myers
(410) 313-2236

Crime Statistics Reflect Increases and Decreases through Third Quarter

A new crime report released today by the Howard County Police Department reflected increases in some areas and decreases in others through the third quarter of 2003, January through September. The report compares data through the third quarter of 2003 to the same time period last year and reflects small fluctuations in numbers.

When compared to last year, the third quarter of 2003 saw 44 additional violent crimes, which include homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Reports of robberies decreased, with 14 fewer in the first nine months of this year than in the same time period last year. Property crimes decreased by 314 during the same time period, including drops in burglary and theft.

The total number of arrests appears to have decreased in the report, but the apparent drop is actually attributed to a change in data collection methods. The FBI does not require the reporting of certain types of traffic arrests that were included in previous Howard County crime reports.

In addition, arrests for auto thefts appear to have dropped, but in fact, the apparent decrease is due to a change in reporting methods. The FBI requires that the most *serious* crime committed by an arrestee be reported. For example, if a suspect is arrested for burglarizing a home and stealing a car, this report would reflect only the burglary as the most serious crime committed. In this case, the auto theft would not be included in the report, since auto theft is at the bottom of the hierarchy list. This method of hierarchy reporting was not utilized in prior reports, which makes it appear that arrests for auto theft have dropped.

In total, 115 arrests included a charge of auto theft, but 73 of those were accompanied by more serious charges and reported accordingly. Forty-two of the auto theft arrests—26 adult, 16 juvenile—were reported where auto theft was the most serious, or only, crime charged.

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Editor's Note: For a complete copy of the Howard County Police Department's Nine Month Crime Report, please contact the Office of Public Affairs at (410) 313-2236.

